AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) An image information reading apparatus comprising:

a support table for placing thereon a container which houses a stimulable phosphor sheet with radiation image information recorded therein, with a lid openably and closably mounted on the container;

displaceable stimulating light applying means for applying stimulating light to the stimulable phosphor sheet which is exposed when said lid is opened;

displaceable light collecting means for collecting light which is emitted from said stimulable phosphor sheet upon exposure to said stimulating light; and

a photoelectric transducer mechanism for converting the collected light to an electric signal;

the arrangement being such that while said stimulating light applying means is facing and being displaced with respect to said stimulable phosphor sheet housed in said container, said stimulating light applying means applies said stimulating light to said stimulable phosphor sheet, and while said light collecting means is being displaced with respect to said stimulable phosphor sheet, said light collecting means collects light emitted from said stimulable phosphor sheet and reads radiation image information from the collected light.

2. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said stimulating light applying means and said light collecting means are coupled to each other for displacement in unison with each other.

3. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

a displacing mechanism for displacing said stimulating light applying means and said light collecting means, said displacing mechanism comprising a ball screw operatively connected to said stimulating light applying means and said light collecting means and a motor for rotating said ball screw about its own axis.

4. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a lifting and lowering mechanism for lifting and lowering said support table.

5. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said lifting and lowering mechanism comprises a plurality of support shafts rotatably mounted on a base and operatively connected to said support table and a plurality of motors for rotating said support shafts respectively about their own axes to lift and lower said support table.

6. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said motors have respective rotatable shafts with respective worms fitted thereover, said

support shafts supporting respective worm gears fitted thereover and held in mesh with said respective worms, whereby said support shafts can be rotated about their own axes by said worms and said worm gears when said motors are energized.

7. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said stimulating light applying means and said light collecting means are coupled to each other for displacement in unison with each other.

8. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising:

a displacing mechanism for displacing said stimulating light applying means and said light collecting means, said displacing mechanism comprising a ball screw operatively connected to said stimulating light applying means and said light collecting means and a motor for rotating said ball screw about its own axis.

9. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said container comprises a container casing with said lid being openably and closably mounted thereon, said lid being removably mounted on said container casing.

10. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said container casing has a groove defined therein, said lid having a side edge slidably fitted in said groove.

11. (Original) An image information reading apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said lid has a tab projecting from a side edge thereof.

12. (Previously presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 1, further wherein the light collecting means and the stimulating light applying means are separately displaceable.

13. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 12, further wherein the light collecting means and the stimulating light applying means are displaceable by separate displacement mechanisms, wherein each said separate displacement mechanism comprises a motor that is energizable in synchronism with each motor of other said separate displacement mechanisms.

14. (Cancelled).

15. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 4, further wherein the lifting and lowering mechanism for lifting and lowering said support table includes motors that are simultaneously energized for lifting and lowering said support table.

16. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 15, wherein said motors comprise worms, worm gears and rotatable shafts.

17. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 1, further wherein said support table functions in a substantially horizontal manner.

18. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 4, further wherein said support table functions in a substantially horizontal manner.

19. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 12, further wherein said support table functions in a substantially horizontal manner.

20. (Previously Presented) The image information reading apparatus of claim 15, further wherein said support table functions in a substantially horizontal manner.